

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 240929Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9677

S E C R E T SEOUL 2897

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: ENHANCE PLUS F5ES

REF: STATE 92820

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY IS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY POSSIBILITY
OUTLINED REFTTEL THAT WE MAY NOW HAVE TO DELIVER USED
F-5ES TO ROKG. HISTORY OF ENHANCE PLUS SCHEME HAS BEEN
FRAUGHT WITH DIFFICULTIES FROM ROK VIEWPOINT AND TO ADD
THIS FAILURE TO MEET ROK EXPECTATIONS TO AN ALREADY LONG
LIST SIMPLY WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY KOREANS.
PARTICULARLY AT THIS TIME WHERE ROKS DEEPLY CONCERNED
ABOUT US "FAILURE" IN INDOCHINA AND WE HAVE EITHER
DISAPPOINTED ROKS OR BEEN SLOW TO DELIVER ON MANY OTHER
ROK DESIRES AND EXPECTATIONS IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE AREA,
ROK SUSPICIOUS OUR INTENTIONS LIABLE TO INCREASE SHARPLY.
I URGE IMMEDIATE RECONSIDERATION OF ANY DECISION SEND TO
ROK USED F5ES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE ROKS ENTERED ENHANCE PLUS DEAL
RELUCTANTLY AND ONLY AFTER SOME VERY TOUGH
BARGAINING WHEREIN THEY REFUSED TO PAY BAILMENT CHARGES
WE REQUESTED. DESPITE LATTER REFUSAL WE NONETHELESS
SUBSEQUENTLY DEDUCTED BAILMENT FROM
KOREAN MAP, AND ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT INFORM ROKS OF THIS,
SECRET

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THEY HAVE BECOME UNOFFICIALLY AWARE OF IT. ASIDE
FROM THIS IRRITANT, BECAUSE WE SENT NEW F-5ES TO TAIWAN
IN CONNECTION ENHANCE PLUS DEAL WITH ROC, ORIGINAL
F-5E DELIVERY SCHEDULE FOR ROK HAS BEEN DELAYED SO

KOREANS WILL ONLY HAVE - 1/2 SQUADRONS BY END JULY THIS YEAR INSTEAD ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TWO SQUADRONS. OUR RECENT REQUEST THAT ROKG PAY FOR OR DONATE EQUIVALENT OF \$4.1 MILLION REHAB COSTS FOR F-5AS BEING RETURNED FROM SOUTH VIETNAM, IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION ENHANCE PLUS AGREEMENT, DID NOT SIT AT ALL WELL DESPITE OUR JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS REQUEST. WHILE NOT MAJOR PROBLEM, ANOTHER ADDED FACTOR IS FACT THAT THOSE F-5AS ALREADY RETURNED HAVE DEVELOPED VARIOUS SMALL FAILURES AND THERE IS FEELING IN ROKAF THEY HAVE NOT BEEN RETURNED IN "AS WAS" CONDITION. FINALLY FROM LATEST MESSAGE JUSMAG HAS RECIEVED FROM SECDEF (SECDEF 222129W APRIL 75) IT APPEARS FUNDING OF ORIGINAL 72 F-5ES WILL HAVE TO BE STRETCHED INTO NEXT YEAR.

2. SO FAR ROKS HAVE BEEN RESTRAINED IN THEIR REACTION TO ENHANCE PLUS PROBLEM, BUT ABOVE LIST OBVIOUSLY ADDS UP TO MAJOR IRRITANT WHICH IF FURTHER EXACERBATED, COULD RESULT IN ANGRY ACCUSATION THAT WE HAVE WELSHED ON THE DEAL. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES THIS WOULD BE WORRISOME ENOUGH. IN THE WAKE OF INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS, AND MANY OTHER PROBLEMS IN SA AREA, AND IN LIGHT SENSITIVE NATURE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ROKS AT THIS JUNCTURE (FULLY DESCRIBED RECENT EMBTELS), ONE MORE MAJOR FAILURE IN SUCH AN IMPORTANT PROGRAM COULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES INDEED.

3. EMBASSY FRANKLY FAILS TO UNDERSTAND FROM REFTTEL HOW WE MANAGED TO GET OURSELVES INTO THIS POSITION. WE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN AWARE NECESSITY FOR REPROGRAMMING FUNDS FOR NEW F-5ES FOR ROKG AND WE QUESTION WHY THIS FACT BECOMING APPARENT ONLY NOW. WE ARE IN NO POSITION HERE TO FIND WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION BUT IN VIEW ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS WE URGE IN STRONGEST TERMS THAT WAY BE SOUGHT. FROM OUR VIEWPOINT THERE IS NO WAY TO SECRET

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MAKE SUCH SWITCH PALATABLE TO ROKS SHORT OF SUBSTANTIAL QUID PRO QUO IN SOME OTHER AREA AND EVEN THEN WE BELEIVE THERE COULD BE MAJOR JOB IN QUELLING ROK SUSPICIONS. SNEIDER

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